

Step Four

Try out improvement theory

Purpose:

The purpose of this step is to test your improvement theories.

Outcome:

The outcome of this step is data upon tests.

Tools:

Force field analysis and systematic diagram

You now have an improvement theory. What's next? You guessed it. You need a game plan for trying out the theory. Get together with the team. Lay out a draft of the plan. Study the draft. Try to identify current conditions which will help in making the changes required to execute the plan. Also identify conditions which may be barriers to the plan. Next, generate a set of actions to be taken to implement the plan. Do not forget to involve other people who will need to help carry out the tests, and be sure to plan for continued data collection during the tests.

THE TOOL YOU MAY WANT TO USE HERE IS FORCE FIELD ANALYSIS.

The writing improvement team did not use this tool since they could not anticipate significant barriers to implementing their improvement theory.

How is your team going to deal with anticipated barriers to implementing its improvement theory?

Plan for testing your theory:

Now you need a detailed plan for exactly how to try out the theory (or theories) you have developed. Consider all the groups who need to learn with you and plan how to keep them involved.

- *The two teachers on the team assigned student numbers to make it easy to draw the student work samples randomly.*
- *They explained to their classes how the weekly writing assignments would be scored to the district rubric in order to see how the two classes were doing on writing. They explained that these assignments were not for a grade, but simply to assess progress. They also explained that the names of the children would not be posted with the scores.*
- *They explained the approach they were taking to their colleagues and promised to share their learning during faculty meetings as the project developed.*
- *They helped their students to construct large charts to display the data and posted them on the wall in each classroom. Making the charts complemented math units on making and using graphs.*
- *The teachers familiarized themselves and their students with the writing rubric, posting it on the classroom wall.*
- *The students developed a way to diagram the sequence in their papers during their peer group time.*
- *Students and teachers explained the process to parents at the fall conference.*
- *Everyone agreed to run the test for an entire marking period.*

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How will your team's improvement theory be tested? How will you assure that what you plan actually gets implemented?